



Bawumia's 'undocumented GH¢7bn' claim points to govt's impending failure - MP

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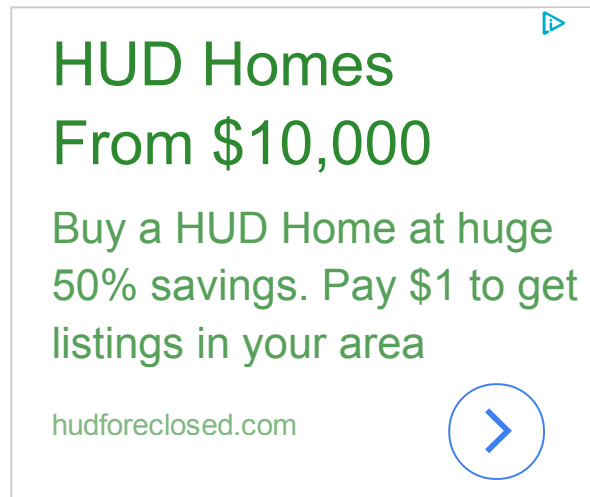
A claim by Vice President, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, that the previous government did not account for a GH¢7 billion expenditure has stirred a war of words between two Members of Parliament.

Isaac Adongo, Minority MP for Bolgatanga Central Constituency and a member of the 6th Parliament's Finance Committee suggests that the Vice President's claim is part of a mischievous move by the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) to lay the grounds for excuses of a cash-strapped economy if the current government fails to meet its grand campaign promises.

However, a member of the same committee in the previous Parliament and Majority MP for Obuasi West, Kwaku Kwarteng, says the claim by the Vice President is informed by facts, dismissing Mr Adongo's assertions.

On Newsnight on Joy FM Wednesday, the two MPs drew swords to defend the two contrasting positions.

The Vice President said on Tuesday that while preparing this year's budget, the NPP-led government found that there was an undisclosed GH¢7 billion in expenditure for various projects during the handing over process.



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Dr Bawumia wondered why data for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 fiscal years that was handed the to the new government by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government did not include records of the colossal amount.

However, on Newsnight, Mr Adongo said Dr Bawumia and the NPP government are only finding fault where there is none.

"The NPP, under the leadership of Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, are trying to find budget space; they are trying to find fiscal space, and what they have done is to put out this information to give the impression that their hands are tied," he told Joy News' Evans Mensah.

According to him because the party campaigned on untenable promises during 2016 election, it fears an impending failure, hence the false claim.

The false claim by Dr Bawumia, the Minority MP reiterated, is to prepare the mind of Ghanaians "so that they will understand them [NPP government] when they don't do the one-village-one-dam, if they don't do the one-district-one-factory and all the freebies they promised; and the people of Ghana will know that they came to meet GH¢7 billion already committed."

However, speaking on the same programme, Kwaku Kwarteng said the current administration is only aiming at rebuilding confidence among the business community by making the matter public because of how the previous government failed abysmally at building a credible economic image.



He insists that no mention was made about the GH¢ 7 billion commitments during the transition process, blaming it on bad economic management strategy.

"Sometimes these commitments [for projects to start] happen without even the Minister of Finance knowing. If the economic management strategy is bad, you have these things all over the place and that is why we are determined to maintain fiscal discipline [and to adhere to] the Public Finance Management Act to ensure that there is discipline in government's finances," clarified.

"It is never our intention for this to degenerate into 'we and them'," he said.

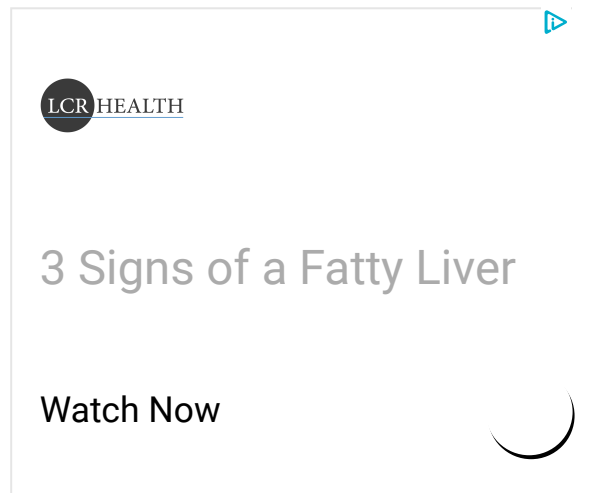
Minority points to records

The Minority had earlier held a press conference on the matter, explaining that the expenditures were captured under the new financial management system, the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (GIFMIX).

That is, although the expenditures may not have made it into the actual handing over notes of the previous government to the current administration, it was captured in the new system allows for an immediate record of expenditures.

Under the previous financial management system, it took three to six months for government expenditures to appear on the database, the Minority clarified.

The NDC Minority is suggesting that had Dr Bawumia known where to look, he would not have gone public with the claim.



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